

Dear Mayor, Vice-Mayor and City Council Members:

AGENDA ITEM IRS #4a

DATE 3-22-01

As you are aware, MAMA has recently released information pertaining to a policy change regarding animals at the Tempe Festival of the Arts. Information was sent to individuals who had brought animals to the 2000 Tempe Fall Festival of the Arts notifying them of the policy change. Information is also being released to the press.

The reasons behind this change in policy are varied but include the

following:

- 1) At times in the past owners have not cleaned up after their pets during the event causing an unsightly and unsanitary situation.
- 2) The outdoor food court areas of the Festival act as outdoor dining, serving and food preparation areas. Maricopa County Health Regulations, while not specifically exempting or including outdoor special events, does not that animals and birds are not allowed in the serving and dining area of restaurants.
- 3) While incidents of dog altercations, both between dogs as well as between humans and dogs are few, the decision to be proactive in avoiding the potential for fights or bites was made.
- 4) Other outdoor events in the community already have a similar policy—Fiesta Bowl Block Party and the 4th of July event. Most recently the Scottsdale Festival of the Arts noted "No Pets Please" in their advertisements as well.

A suggestion has been made to have individuals sign waivers and provide proof of vaccinations at the Festival entrance. Unfortunately the waivers are more peace of mind rather than full indemnification. If an incident should occur, MAMA could well be brought into the incident even though a waiver was signed.

After talking with our risk management people, again, we determined to make a proactive decision and hopefully avoid a situation rather than having to react to a situation. We also have advised and worked through the City of Tempe Event Task Force updating and advising them as we have worked through this process.

Also, please be advised that we will be allowing Certified Service Animals with their owners, or if the situation should occur, a Service Animal in training with their trainer to attend the Festival. This policy is again, in line with and similar to other regional events.

As a dog, cat and snake owner myself, I question why one would bring an animal to such an event. Many animals, particularly dogs are well trained, behaved and have responsible owners. Unfortunately at a large outdoor events you can never predict what others will do in relation to the animal. I wonder, is it fair to the animal to subject to a potentially dangerous and/or stressful situation?

Many people, particularly dog owners, treat and accept their animals as companions and family members. They wonder why they can't bring their "family members" with them. As a parent, I realize and accept that there are certain places and situations where it would be best for my children if they were to be at home rather than at an event or function that is not geared for them.

Events such as this may and do provide a forum for animal welfare groups to reach the public. For a number of years we have worked with Liberty Wildlife in such a situation. The animals that they bring to showcase their cause are under the care of trained docents and staff and are within an area set aside for their use. I have indicated to other groups that we would be most interested in discussing a future partnership with their cause or shelter at future events.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to more fully explain this policy change. Perhaps we could have been clearer in our communication to pet owners of the underlying reasoning for this change.

Thanks again, please do not hesitate to contact me if you need further information or clarification. I can be reached at 480-967-4877 x25 or 602-228-9813.

Sincerely,

Gary Sanders  
Executive Director  
Mill Avenue Merchants Association